

Samuel M. Nickerson House
(now American College of Surgeons)
40 East Erie Street;
northeast corner of North Wabash
Avenue and Erie Street;
Chicago
Cook County
Illinois

HABS No. ILL-1052

HABS
ILL,
16-CHIG,
54-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. ILL-1052

SAMUEL M. NICKERSON HOUSE
(now American College of Surgeons)

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Location: 40 East Erie Street; northeast corner of North Wabash Avenue and Erie Street; Chicago, Cook County, Illinois.

Present Owner: American College of Surgeons; 55 East Erie Street, Chicago.

Present Use: Administration offices and meeting rooms.

Statement of Significance: The house was designed in 1883 by one of Chicago's earliest architects, Edward Burling, for Samuel M. Nickerson, a wealthy banker. Nickerson spared no expense in creating his "Marble Palace," so-called because of its elegant interior which was finished in marbles, rare woods, and other rich materials. The original character of this spectacular home is beautifully preserved to this day.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: Legal description of the property: The southwest quarter of Block 40 in Kinzie's Addition to Chicago, being a subdivision of the north fractional section 10-39-14. Recorded January 18, 1834.

The following is taken from the chain of title contained in Book 459B, pp. 192-193 in the Cook County Recorder's Office: The property is first recorded as belonging to William G. McCormick et al. (Document 10/7, inventory, dated 1871). Samuel M. Nickerson received the property from the City of Chicago on November 26, 1879 (Document 246532). Nickerson is recorded to have entered into an un-named agreement with St. James Episcopal Church, located immediately to the north of the Nickerson Mansion, on May 15, 1889 (Document 1101034). Lucius G. Fischer /sic/ purchased the house and land from Nickerson on May 2, 1900 (Document 2954857). The property is listed under Fisher's name as of his inventory dated August 24, 1916 (Document 157/434). On October 13, 1919, Charles Bosborne presented the deed to the property to the American College of Surgeons Corporation, the present owners (Document 107792T).

2. Date of erection: 1883.

3. Architect: Burling and Whitehouse, design primarily by Burling. Below is a biographical sketch of each man:

Edward Burling was born in 1819 in Newberg [sic], New York. He was trained as a carpenter and worked at that profession until he came to Chicago in 1843. The early date of his architectural work in Chicago establishes him as the second architect to practice in the city -- only John Van Osdel preceded him. His first house was built at Wabash and Monroe Streets for E. B. Wilhanis; the pillard home later became a restaurant, known as the "Maison d'Oree." Most of Burling's important, large commissions were destroyed in the Fire of 1871. Among these were The Post Office Building, The First National Bank Building, The Tribune Building, The Chamber of Commerce Building, The Music Hall, Holy Name Cathedral, and St. James Episcopal Church (rebuilt in 1872, southeast corner of Wabash Avenue and Huron Street, immediately to the north of the Nickerson House. See HABSI form, (1960)). With the exception of a three-year period when he worked as superintendent for Ogden, Jones, & Co., Burling practiced in the following partnerships: Burling & Bauman, Burling & Adler (Dankmar), and Burling and Whitehouse. Burling died in 1892; he is commemorated by a Chicago street which bears his name. [Information obtained from: "Burling Obituary," February 22, 1892; Alida and Charley Smith, Mr. Burling of Burling Street (Chicago: 1954); and Henry F. Withey, and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), p. 96. See same and Bibliography for additional information/.

Francis Meredith Whitehouse was born to a prominent New York family on October 2, 1848. His father, the Rev. Henry J. Whitehouse was Episcopal Bishop of Illinois for several years. The younger Whitehouse received a private education and studied architecture at the University of Göttingen. Upon returning to his family in Chicago, Whitehouse entered Burling's office as a draftsman, later becoming a junior partner. The partnership was dissolved in 1889, at which time Whitehouse continued work, primarily in domestic architecture. Among the buildings credited to Whitehouse are: The Epiphany Episcopal Church, The First National Bank, the remodeling of the Cudahy house as a hotel, the Yerkes, McClurg, Barbara Armour, and Colonel Loomis houses, and Choral Hall at the World's Columbian Exposition. Whitehouse retired in 1893 and moved to New England, then to New York. He died in March, 1938. [Information from Withey, op. cit., pp. 653-654.]

4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: Builder and cut stone contractor was the firm of Furst and Kerber [Supplemental Material #1]. Interior woodwork was designed by Fiedler [Supplemental Material #6]; J. Drury, Old Chicago Houses (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1941), p. 117/.
5. Original plans, construction, etc.: From the original Building Permit # 1081, dated May 27, 1879, in the Department of Buildings, Chicago: "S. M. Nickerson received a permit for a brick dwelling, stone front, 3 stories and 1 basement, 64' front, 102' deep, 56' high, located at Cass [Wabash] and Erie."

"This building is one of the few fire-proof houses in the city. The brick partition-walls are carried one above another to the roof: the floors are of brick arches turned between iron beams upon which bedded in mortar are the flooring strips to which the flooring boards are nailed." [Residence of Samuel M. Nickerson; Burling and Whitehouse, architects, "American Architect IX (February 26, 1881), p. 103]

"...Built in 1883;...three stories and one basement high: Burling and Whitehouse were the architects...cost of about \$450,000...floor construction is of masonry arches supported on iron beams." [Frank A. Randall, History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949), p. 98.]

The house is distinguished by the lavish decoration of the interior which consists of several varieties of marble, rare woods, hand-tooled leather, tiles, etc. [For a complete description of the interior appointments see: Drury, op. cit., pp. 115-118; and Supplemental Material.]

6. Alterations and additions: Lucius Fisher, the second owner of the house, added a rare book room to the northwest corner of the house in 1900-1901. The room was designed by George Maher; working under him, especially on the fireplace and round table, was Robert Siefert. The glass decoration was done by Giannini, and Hilgarth [Supplemental Sources, # 1, 2].

Adjoining the Nickerson Mansion to the east is the John B. Murphy Memorial, an auditorium designed by Marshall and Fox and built in 1923-1926. The facade is of Bedford stone, and is said to be executed in a "French Renaissance" style. The large bronze doors were designed by John N. Tilton, modeled by Kemp of New York, and cast by Tiffany Studios [Supplemental Sources # 5, 6, 7].

In 1963, the American College of Surgeons added a new building by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill to its complex. The 8-story office building is located across the street from the Nickerson Mansion, at 55 East Erie Street.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

The Nickerson Mansion was one of the most expensive and lavish homes built in Chicago before the turn of the century. "Nickerson's Marble Palace," as it was widely known, was the showplace-home of Samuel M. Nickerson, a prominent Chicago banker and one of the wealthiest men of his time. Nickerson was born in Massachusetts and came to Chicago in 1858 to enter the distilling business. He soon became involved in banking, being one of the founders of the First National Bank of Chicago in 1863. He was president of this, the oldest bank in the city, when he built his North-Side mansion in 1883. Nickerson was also the first president of the Union Stock Yards National Bank, as well as the founder and president of the old Chicago City Street Railway Company. Nickerson was an active participant in the cultural life of Chicago, leaving a large collection of artifacts to the Art Institute.

The Nickersons and their son Roland lived in the house until 1900, when they moved to New York. The Mansion was sold to Lucius G. Fisher, the president of the Union Paper & Bag Co. of Chicago, who maintained it with few alterations. The Fishers added a few stuffed animal heads and their collection of antique weapons to the house, but otherwise left it unchanged. (Fisher was the builder and namesake of the Fisher Building, (HABS No. ILL-1082), designed by D. H. Burnham in 1896, and located at 343 South Dearborn Street, at the northeast corner of West Van Buren Street, in Chicago.)

In 1919 the house was purchased by more than 100 of Chicago's leading citizens and presented to the American College of Surgeons. The College, founded in 1913, had been considering a number of major American cities for the location of its headquarters. The civic gesture of the Chicagoan's who purchased the house brought the College to the city and the Nickerson Mansion. The names of the donors may be seen inscribed on a bronze tablet outside the door of the building.

The building has been used for offices since 1919, however, very little of the original ornamentation has been altered by the change-over. The house has continued to be associated with the medical activities that are centered in Chicago. /Information from J. Drury, op. cit., pp. 115-118; see also Bibliography, Supplementary Sources # 4, 8, 9, 10, 11/.

C. Bibliography:

1. Andreas, A. T. History of Chicago. Vol. 2. Chicago: The A. T. Andreas Company, Publishers, 1885. pp. 564-565.
Biography of Burling.
2. Burling, Edward, d. February 22, 1892. Obituary in newspaper files in the Library of the Chicago Historical Society.
3. Chicago, Biographical Sketches of Leading Men. Chicago: Wilson, Pierce & Co., 1876. p. 57.
Photograph of Burling.
4. Clippings filed under: Chicago, Ill., Nickerson (Samuel M.) House. Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago.
Newspaper articles only.
5. Condit, Carl W. The Chicago School of Architecture. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964. pp. 145-146.
Information on Burling and Whitehouse.
6. Dalton, Pat. "Surgeons Call Palace Home," Chicago Daily News, October 8, 1958.
Photographs.
7. "Death of Edward Burling, Architect," Inland Architect. Vol. 19, No. 3 (April, 1892). pp. 29-30.
8. Drury, J. Old Chicago Houses. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941. pp. 115-118.
9. Encyclopedia of Biography of Illinois. Vol. 1. Chicago: Century Publishing Company, 1892. p. 74.
Biographical sketch of Nickerson.
10. Flavin, Genevieve. "Doctor Guests to Get Glimpse of Old Chicago," Chicago Tribune, October 30, 1955.
Photograph.
11. Gilbert, Paul and Bryson, Charles Lee. Chicago and Its Makers. Chicago: Felix Mendelsohn, Publisher, 1929. p. 463--interior views of library and gallery, and hall; p. 521--exterior from east.
12. History of the First National Bank. Chicago: H. C. Morris, 1902. p. 61.
Biographical sketch of Nickerson.

13. Kirkland, Joseph and Caroline. The Story of Chicago. Vol. 2. Chicago: Dibble Publishing Company, 1894. p. 270.
Reference to Nickerson's art collection.
14. Pritchard, Edward R. Illinois of Today and Its Progressive Cities. Chicago: 1897. p. 52.
Biographical sketch of Nickerson.
15. Randall, Frank A. History of the Development of Building Construction in Chicago. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1949. p. 98.
16. "Residence of S. M. Nickerson," in Bancroft, H. H., Achievements of Civilization, Vol. 9 (1908). p. 827.
Burnham Library in the Art Institute of Chicago.
17. "Residence of Samuel M. Nickerson; Burling and Whitehouse, Architects," American Architect. Vol. 9 (February 26, 1881. p. 103, pl. 33.
Description, elevation and floor plan.
18. Smith, Alida and Charley. Mr. Burling of Burling Street. Chicago: 1954. 14 p. illustrations.
Privately printed and distributed at Christmas, 1954, from their home at 2412 North Burling Street, Chicago 14.
Library of the Chicago Historical Society.
19. Tallmadge, Thomas E. Architecture in Old Chicago. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1941. pp. 89-92.
Biographical sketch of Burling.
20. The Biographical Dictionary and Portrait Gallery of Representative Men of Chicago, Minnesota Cities and the World's Columbian Exposition. Vol. 1. Chicago: American Biographical Publishing Company, 1892. pp. 18-22.
Biographical sketch of Nickerson.
21. Whitehouse, Francis Meredith, Obituary Notice. Illinois Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin. Vol. 24. (February - March, 1940). p. 8.
22. Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956. pp. 96, 653, 654.
Biographical sketches of Burling and Whitehouse with references.

D. Supplementary Sources:

The following entries were obtained from the files of the

Library of the American College of Surgeons, 55 East Erie Street, Chicago. The Library has a good collection of clippings, notes, and miscellaneous photographs relating to the Nickerson Mansion and its history. These are bound in two loose-leaf notebooks and may be consulted at the Library.

1. "A noted firm of cut-stone contractors, Furst and Kerber, were the builders," p. 7. Lists sources of information as Andreas, Vol. 3, p. 84 and interviews with Thomas E. Tallmadge.

/Josephine Skidmore, "American College of Surgeons, Nickerson House," March 5, 1938. 7 typed pages, presumably for an article./

2. "Mr. Walter MacDougal said today that an architect Bob Seaforth (?) designed the fireplace in the rare book room about 1900 or 1901. The glass decorations were made by Fianinni /sic/ /Giannini/ and Hilgarth, who built it. Fianinni /sic/ heated the pieces of glass over a flame until they were cherry red and then threw some salts /sic/ on it to give that iridescent look."

/Typed note, dated May 26, 1948. "From: Mr. Bosselman's notes; Re: Fireplace in Rare Book Room."/

3. "Mr. Fisher was president of the Union Paper on Dearborn Street and added the Rare Book room to house . . . The rare book room was designed in toto by George Maher; under him worked Robert Siefert who carved the lions on each side of the mantle and also carved the Round Table."

/Typed sheet, dated August 17, 1950. Information obtained from Walter MacDougal, architect, who worked with George Maher at about 1900, when the Rare Book Room was made./

4. A short description by Lucius Fisher's elder daughter of the original home, naming the occupants of the various rooms. Mrs. Dixon was married in the home. She states that the third floor hall was used for dancing and that a platform for musicians was laid over the stairwell on this and other festive occasions.

/Visit of Mrs. Dixon to College on October 20, 1953" (as reported by Fred Bosselman)./

5. "I made the drawings for the bronze doors at the John B. Murphy Memorial building, and I find by calling Mr. G. B. Hammer (Superintendent for Marshall Fox, architect), that the Flour City Ornamental Iron Company, Minneapolis made

the doors." [A penciled note states that the information is incorrect; the Minneapolis firm did not do this type of work.]

[Letter from John N. Tilton, Jr., Armstrong, Furst and Tilton, Roanoke, Tower, 11 S. LaSalle St., Chicago 3, February 10, 1950, to Mr. Fred Bosselman, American College of Surgeons.]

6. "It [the woodwork] was designed by A. Fiedler who for years was designer for one of the leading decorative and art furniture manufacturers of New York City, under a salary of some \$1,800 per year." p. 1.

Follows-with a description of the interior and materials. Indicates that a solarium and carriage way to east was eliminated to make way for the Murphy Memorial. States that the John B. Murphy Building was begun 1923, and completed 1926; style is "modern French Renaissance."

Below is a list of the subject matter for the doors:

Asculapins, the god of medicine
Pasteur, the founder of scientific medicine
Osler, a great clinician
Lister, the father of modern surgery
McDowell, an American pathfinder in surgery
Gorgas, a world sanitarian.

["American College of Surgeons' Headquarters," three typed pages.]

7. Murphy Memorial designed by Marshall & Fox, architects; inspiration was LePetite Palais in Paris and the Paris Opera House; bronze doors modeled by Kemp, New York, and cast by Tiffany Studios.

["Three Old Residences of Gold Coast, Past and Present," seven typed pages, p. 2.]

8. A description of Nickerson's bequest to Art Institute of his collection of Japanese, Chinese, and East Indian art objects, including jades, agates & crystals, as well as a \$50,000 endowment.

[Notes from the Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago, October 1914, p. 19: "Samuel M. Nickerson, d. July 20, 1914, Trustee of the Art Institute from the time of its incorporation."]

9. James, F. Cyril. The Growth of Chicago Banks. New York: Harper & Bros., 1938. Vol. I: Ch. X, pp. 352, 368, 440; Ch. XIII; Ch. XIV, p. 496; Ch. XIV, p. 648. Vol. II: Ch. XVIII, p. 691; Ch. XXI.
References to Nickerson.
10. Clark, Herma. "When Chicago was Young," Chicago Tribune, Sunday, January 25, 1948.
Article on Nickerson.
11. "Surgeons Pick Chicago as Site of Huge School," Chicago Tribune, December 21, 1919.
Article concerning donation of the Nickerson House to the American College of Surgeons.
12. Old view of northwest corner of Rush and Erie Streets, showing the 660 Rush Building (R. Hall McCormick Mansion, c. 1875; see Drury, op. cit.) that was once occupied by the College. Also included is a view of the original Nickerson carriage house, which was a 3-story brick building with very little ornamentation. It was located to the east of the Nickerson Mansion, with a courtyard and loggia in between it and the house. The Murphy Memorial is now on the site. Photograph by Kaufmann & Farry Co., Chicago, 22-5241-2.
13. Photo-copies of a line drawing (location of original not indicated) of a single unit of interior marble paneling for the Nickerson Mansion with materials named.
14. The lamp has the shape of an urn, set on a low, square base. The shade is fringed. This lamp was probably part of the decoration added to the house after it was acquired by the American College of Surgeons. In addition to this drawing there are several small lists of furnishings dated c. 1921.

Small pencil drawing: "1/4 full size, Etruscan lamp, finished 2 colors. Decorated with gold & color. 50.⁰⁰/100 each decorated as sketch."
15. Dedication booklets for Murphy Memorial Hall. Description of the building and several views of interiors and exteriors.

E. Supplementary Material:

The following is a copy of an original letter in the archives of the American College of Surgeons. The letter was discovered by Mr. Pond of the Chicago firm of Pond & Pond and Edgar Martin, architects, on March 10, 1933, who presented it to the College.

The author, D. Davis, was a young architect who was working on the interior drawings for the Nickerson house at the time of writing. The reference to "Adler" is, of course, Dankmar Adler.

232 W. Washington St.

Chicago, 5/22, 1881

Friend Mason:

Last Friday I received from Dufane, then at Detroit, a telegram asking if I had received a letter from him during the week, which I had not, so I do not know its contents. The dispatch came in care of R. W. Bates & Co. so I fancied you must have had something to do with it. I wish you would send me Duvane's present address. I answered on the back of the dispatch so I possibly would not get his initials right.

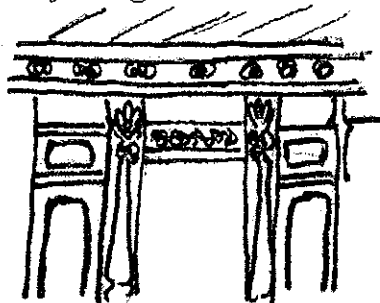
Adler led off with a new style this spring and last winter. It is strongly oriental. J. M. VanOsdal, Jr. told me he thought it was architecture run crazy. It certainly is a departure in the Jewish direction such as I have never seen before, and has features belonging to the ancient Egyptian. Burnham & Root have gotten up their first office building that I know of. From the heavy brick Portland Block, corner Washington and Dearborn Streets, it runs South some 80 feet on Dearborn and is six stories tall, with mansard and steep tower shooting skyward. Now that the N. W. Depot is finished it is universally admired.

I do not know whether you visited the interior of the Nickerson's house when you were here, as I recommended, or not. The steam engine and rubbing bed was running last Saturday grinding away the marble pretty much as it was when you were here, except we (R. W. Bates & Co. and employees) have made them move out of the library and art gallery, and they have gone into the drawing room. Their work is pretty well finished. They are now putting up the stair rail, which is of choice marble with beautifully carved alabaster open work about 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick between rail and curb. Floor of main hall, which is about 18' x 52' on first floor, also on second floor is of white and black marble blocks. The walls of hall are of various colored marbles and onyx finished off in wainscoting or dado, with field or wall above to frieze and then cornice surmounted thus:



to ceiling by an
tier of panels.

All this work is done off in panels, etc., which I will here give you an idea of by rough sketch as nearly as I remember how it is. I do not attempt to caps, rosettes and is introduced where-improve appearances. etc., are marble and onyx.



The carving show, but other carving ever it will Stiles, columns, panels are

The ceilings of the halls are marble panels in iron framework. In front of the grand stairway in second story there is an opening through hall floor to first story, enclosed by marble and alabaster railing, the plan of the second story being thus: The third story hall has parquet floor. The woodwork, which is nearly completed in all front part of house (that is, on both sides of main hall and in art gallery) is nearly as much as better than the finish in Thompson's house, as the finish in Thompson's house is better than common pine band-mould finish. It would be hard to comprehend its beauty without seeing it. As you may remember, it was designed by A. Fiedler who for years was designer for one of the leading decorative and art furniture manufacturers of New York City, under a salary of some \$1,800 per year, working about six hours a day. I have seen him work. He will do as much drawing in an hour as a pretty good ordinary draughtsman will do in five or six hours. His scale drawing is chiefly lead pencil sketches, largely done free-hand, over which he brushes on a tint of water-color.

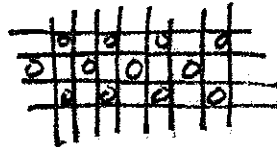


Some years ago he came here from New York City with some seven or eight thousand dollars and started a factory, but was drawn into some real-estate speculation and lost all. Then he took a partner and they failed again, our foreman says, by giving rich people better work than they will pay for. Last year he hired to Schasty of New York City, who finished the drawing room and some other rooms of Nickerson's, but this spring he came back and went in with Adison.

I have it pleasanter this year than I had it last. Bates offered me \$10.00 per week but finally gave me \$13.00 when I would not take less, and tried to have me contract for two years instead of one, which I would not do. The evening after the day I pledged myself to Bates, Addison & Fiedler offered me \$14.00 per week by the year. Bates was sharp and forced me to a contract before my time ran out, so others should not have a chance to make me offers.

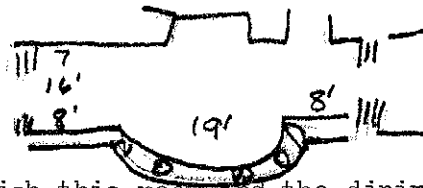
We have Mitchel's work about ready to set up. Mrs. Alex. Mitchel, after buying carpets for the room, came around and ordered a design for one woven whole. We have recently gotten up carpet, mantel and furniture for a very large and beautiful parlor in Louisville, Ky., in Louis XVI style, with a little Japanese feature introduced which enlivens the style much. Last Friday and Saturday I was detailing the cupboard closets and paneling that enclose the plumbing in the bathroom off of Nickerson's own chamber. It is in St. Domingo mahogany, trimmed and relieved with brass. The floor of this bathroom is encaustic tile - wainscoting marble. Between it and frieze, same as floor, plain light grey encaustic tiling, band under frieze marble, Frieze diaper-pattern of yellowish green glazed encaustic tile, each piece about 3" square, every other one

having rings, thus:
wood for this room
to stop off of the
on. Bates is now in
me with orders to
of finish for draw-



To make details of
the foreman got me
job Bates left me
New York. He left
complete the design
ing room of a New

York City Mansion, one side of which he took with him. We had already designed a hall carpet for them which they liked sufficiently to order; and to take the finishing of their drawing room out of their architect's hands and give it to us. The woods we propose to use are satin and Amerant, style Louis XVI, with Japanese treatment of ornamentation. Ceiling is timber ribs and canvas panels. Plan of room is about thus:



We also furnish this room and the dining room.

In our first class houses it seems to be the present fashion to give the designing of the best rooms to decorative cabinet designers, American architects as a rule not being sufficiently educated in this department of their profession. Viz: Burling is architect of Nickerson's house, but Fiedler was employed on the room finish, and even in marble work, Fiedler's design for stair rail is taken in place of Burling's. Even at lower end of main stair the iron framework of flaring end of stringer and curb is being cut away to suit Fiedler's changes. The ceiling under stringers and panels in outside of curb to these stairs, also risers and treads are marble.

One block south of Nickerson's, Medill is building a large house. Palmer and Spinning are the Architects but Fiedler has been employed to design finish for two best rooms, and R. W.

Bates & Co. have contract for the work. We also have contract of finish for main hall, dining room and closets off. Very little of the work comes to us completely enough detailed that our men can make the work until I go over the drawings and complete them, so you may warrant that I don't have much loafing to do. Bates deals in carpets, and I have to measure the rooms and prepare the diagrams for these also so that the carpets made from them will fit. Our largest carpet order this season was for a house on Prairie Ave. and amounted to about 800 yards. It was almost like a hotel in size. There were six bays to fit with window recesses, mantels, hearths, stairways, etc.

I want to find out what Dufane wants of me. I would as soon as not leave Chicago for a good offer next spring. Bates, I think, wants too much for too little, and I should like to get out of this very fine work before my eyes fail on me. You should have seen Chicago River this spring, running with a furious boiling torrent into the lake. It runs the other way now, and I believe a move is being made to run the tunnel two miles farther into the lake. I am glad of it, for the water does not taste very good at second drinking. My best respects to you and Jack Rice, and all your folks.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) D. Davis

Prepared by Larry J. Homolka
Historian
National Park Service
J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
August 1964

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: One of the most elaborate examples of late-nineteenth-century residential Beaux Arts Classicism in Chicago.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. Exterior surface of structure is a porous sandstone which is dirty and cannot be successfully cleaned due to its porosity.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: An approximate rectangle, 60' (three-bay south front) x 100'; three stories plus basement.
2. Foundations: Light-grey rusticated sandstone at basement level on south, east and west sides.
3. Structural system: Brick bearing walls with cast-iron beams and shallow arched corrugated metal pans supporting concrete.
4. Wall construction: The three main stories on the south (front), east and west sides and part of the second and third stories on the north (rear) are smooth-faced sandstone ashlar - originally light grey, but now very dirty. There are three string courses between most floors, one at sill level, one just below the sill brackets, and one at lintel level of the windows below. On the south (front), the southeast and southwest bays project beyond the middle bay; on the west, the middle bay projects slightly. Jutting out at the northwest corner is a one-story windowless gallery with ornate pilasters.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: A porch at the center of the south (front) is raised to the level of the first floor main entrance. It is approached by a stair which originates at the walk on the south (front) and curves to meet the porch at the west. The stairway has broad solid sandstone railings on either side, with squat fluted newels. Double granite columns with composite capitals support the southeast and southwest corners. Pilasters with similar capitals flank the doorway. There are sandstone balustrades on the east and south sides of the porch and above the wide crowning cornice.
6. Chimneys: Three on west facade and three on east side of house. They show only above cornice line. One chimney on north wall.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance is double doors in the center of the south (front) facade opening onto the porch. The outer doors are wooden with an upper glass panel and a lower recessed wooden panel. These doors swing out. A set of double doors, each with two recessed wooden panels and extensively carved relief are just inside the outer entrance doors. They swing into a vestibule.

- b. Windows: Windows are mostly one-over-one-light, double-hung throughout. Openings have projecting sandstone sills and lintels. On the south (front) the architraves are incised with egg and dart, and bead and reel motifs.

8. Roof:

- a. Covering: Flat, built-up.
- b. Cornice, eaves: A heavy, projecting sandstone cornice has sandstone brackets below. It is just above a frieze of patera motifs alternating with triglyphs.
- c. Dormer, cupolas, tower: A round oriel with three windows is located on the east wall near the south corner off a second floor sitting-room in the southeast corner of the house.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The plan provides for service, storage, laundry, mechanical equipment and a former billiard room which was on the west.
 - b. First floor: There are a vestibule and large stair hall in the center of the house. East of this hall is a library, breakfast-room, dining-room and (formerly) a butler's pantry. West of the hall are three large parlors. To the north of the house on the west side is a large gallery, originally used for the exhibition of paintings. It is only one story, and has a large stained glass dome over. To the north of the stair hall and to the east of the one-story gallery is the kitchen.
 - c. Second floor: There is a large stair hall in the center, with bedrooms and bathrooms on either side. Servants' quarters above kitchen are at the level of the stair landing, slightly below the main, second floor level.
 - d. Third floor: Bedrooms and bathrooms are on either side of a large hall. Servants' quarters to this area above second floor servants' quarters.
2. Stairways: The main stair well is in the main center hall. The stair has marble treads, risers, balusters and railings, and carries from the first floor to the third floor. A wooden stair in the same location leads to the basement.

A servants' stair in the north part of the house is on the west side of the servants' quarters. A stair has been added on the east side of the house in place of the butler's pantry. There is an elevator shaft adjacent to the servants' stair, in the rear of the building.

3. Flooring: In the principal rooms of the house, the flooring is a variety of 2- $\frac{1}{4}$ " oak strips, parquets, and inlaid designs. In the main circulation areas, there is marble. In the central hall on the third floor there is asphalt tile.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most ceilings are paneled marble with either wooden or marble moldings articulating the panels. The walls are finished in a variety of paints, tiles, marbles, etc. Originally, all walls were either marble or tapestry. Wainscots in all principal rooms are either wooden or marble, corresponding with the wall surface and molding details in the individual rooms.
5. Doorways and doors: Wooden doors, 9' high and 3" thick have recessed panels and carved reliefs. The designs and woods vary greatly throughout the house.
6. Decorative features and trim: Extensive marble and wooden carvings appear throughout the house; a number of large pieces of built-in furniture are ornamented with mosaic tile.
7. Notable hardware: All hardware is intricately detailed. Hinges have a variety of surface designs.
8. Lighting, type of fixture: Lighting was originally gas, is now electrical. Many light fixtures in main rooms, decorated in a delicate floral motif, have not been converted to electricity.
9. Heating: Central heating. Each major room has a fireplace. There are many delicately detailed grills in the house.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. General setting and orientation: The house faces south on the northeast corner of East Erie Street and North Wabash Avenue, on Chicago's near north side. The area is presently a combination of office buildings and apartments.
2. Landscaping, walks, entrance: There is a small strip of

grass between the house and a sandstone railing running adjacent to the walks on the south (front) and west sides.

Prepared by J. William Rudd
Supervisory Architect
National Park Service
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